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Thorough examination by the Examiner is noted and appreciated.

The Specification has been amended to remove mistakenly included portions in Applicants instant invention and to correct grammatical errors in the claims.

Claim Rejections under 35 USC 112

Claims 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 11, and 12 stand rejected under 35 USC 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement.

Examiner contends that there is no support in Applicants disclosure for the term "independently actuated" and that "it is not seen where the actuators are independently actuated".

Applicants respectfully refer Examiner to the following excerpts from Applicants Specification:

Beginning at line 10, page 17:

"The knife ring 42 typically encircles the chuck 40 and is mounted for

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selective vertical displacement in the apparatus 32, in the manner hereinafter described. At least one, and typically, multiple ring actuating cylinders 56 are provided in the bottom portion of the apparatus 32. An actuating piston 58 is upwardly-extendible from the ring actuating cylinder 56 and is attached to the ring base 54 of the knife ring 42 according to techniques known by those skilled in the art. Each ring actuating cylinder 56 may be either pneumatic or hydraulic. Accordingly, fluid flow tubes 60 are provided in fluid communication with the interior of each ring actuating cylinder 56 to facilitate flow of the air or liquid fluid pressure 62 between a fluid reservoir (not shown) into and out of the ring actuating cylinder 56, to extend the actuating piston 58 from or retract the actuating piston 58 into the ring actuating cylinder 56."

Beginning at line 14, page 18:

"The hydraulic pump and supply mechanism (not shown) for each ring actuating cylinder 56 may be operably connected to a controller (not shown) for automatically controlling the vertical position of the knife ring 42 in the apparatus 32."

Beginning at line 6, page 19:

"Next, by actuation of the respective ring actuating cylinders 56, the knife ring 42 is lifted in the apparatus 32 until the upper edge 42a of the knife ring 42 is located at a gap distance 43a of from typically about 0.1 mm to about 0.4 mm with respect to the backside 48 of the wafer 46, as shown in

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FIG. 3."

Beginning at line 17, page 20:

"After the developing liquid 34 has remained on the wafer 46 in a puddle development phase of selected duration to develop the photoresist thereon, the knife ring 42 is lowered in the apparatus 32 **by reverse actuation of the respective ring actuating cylinders 56**, until the upper edge 42a of the knife ring 42 is located at a gap distance 43b of from typically about 1.4 mm to about 1.5 mm with respect to the backside 48 of the wafer 46."

Thus, it would be clear to one of ordinary skill that since each of the **respective ring actuating cylinders** may either be pneumatic or hydraulic and that **each of the respective ring actuating cylinders may be connected to a controller** for automatically controlling and **actuating each** of the respective ring actuating cylinders, that each of the respective ring actuating cylinders is **independently actuated**.

Applicants respectfully refer Examiner to the following relevant portions of the MPEP and the case law:

ADEQUACY OF WRITTEN DESCRIPTION*A. Read and Analyze the Specification for**Compliance with 35 U.S.C. 112, para. 1*

Office personnel should adhere to the following procedures when reviewing patent applications for

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compliance with the written description requirement of 35 U.S.C. 112, para. 1. The examiner has the initial burden, after a thorough reading and evaluation of the content of the application, of presenting evidence or reasons why a person skilled in the art would not recognize that the written description of the invention provides support for the claims. There is a strong presumption that an adequate written description of the claimed invention is present in the specification as filed, *Wertheim*, 541 F.2d at 262, 191 USPQ; however, with respect to newly added or claims, applicant should show support in the disclosure for the new or amended claims.

"[I]n considering the disclosure of a reference, it is proper to take into account not only specific teachings of the reference but also the inferences which one skilled in the art would reasonably be expected to draw therefrom." *In re Preda*, 401 F.2d 825, 826, 159 USPQ 342, 344 (CCPA 1968)

It is now well accepted that a satisfactory description may be in the claims or any other portion of the originally filed specification.

See MPEP, 8th Ed, Section 2163 (I)

While there is ***no in haec verba*** requirement, newly added claim limitations must be supported in the specification through **express, implicit, or inherent disclosure**.

See MPEP, 8th Ed, Section 2163 (I) (B)

The fundamental factual inquiry is whether the specification conveys with reasonable clarity to those skilled in the art that, as of the filing date sought, applicant was in possession of the invention as now claimed. See, e.g., *Vas-Cath, Inc.*, 935 F.2d at 1563-64, 19 USPQ2d at 1117.

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Possession may be shown in many ways. For example, possession may be shown by describing an actual reduction to practice of the claimed invention. Possession may also be shown by a clear depiction of the invention in detailed drawings or in structural chemical formulas which permit a person skilled in the art to clearly recognize that applicant had possession of the claimed invention. An adequate written description of the invention may be shown by any description of sufficient, relevant, identifying characteristics so long as a person skilled in the art would recognize that the inventor had possession of the claimed invention. See, e.g., *Purdue Pharma L.P. v. Faulding Inc.*, 230 F.3d 1320, 1323, 56 USPQ2d 1481, 1483 (Fed. Cir. 2000)

Applicants respectfully contend that one of ordinary skill would clearly understand that Applicants invention encompasses and **explicitly refers to independently actuated ring actuation cylinders**, e.g., each cylinder is explicitly referred to as a **ring actuation cylinder** and is clearly explained that actuation is **respective to each ring actuation cylinder**, and that such **actuation is described and shown with respect to two independently operating ring actuation cylinders as shown in the Figures.**

Thus Applicants respectfully assert that Examiner has failed to make out a *prima facie* case supporting rejection under Section 112, first paragraph.

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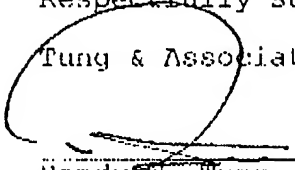
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Based on the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that the Claims are now in condition for allowance. Such favorable action by the Examiner at an early date is respectfully solicited."

In the event that the present invention as claimed is not in condition for allowance for any reason, the Examiner is respectfully invited to call the Applicants' representative at his Bloomfield Hills, Michigan office at (248) 540-4040 such that necessary action may be taken to place the application in a condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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